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THE  
**Rabbit Witch**  
and  
**Other Tales**  
by  
**KATHARINE PYLE.**



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# The Rabbit Witch

and Other Tales



# The Rabbit Witch

and other Tales

by

Katharine Pyle



New York

E. P. Dutton and Company

31 West Twenty-third Street



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Press of J. J. Little & Co.  
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TO.  
MY.NEPH  
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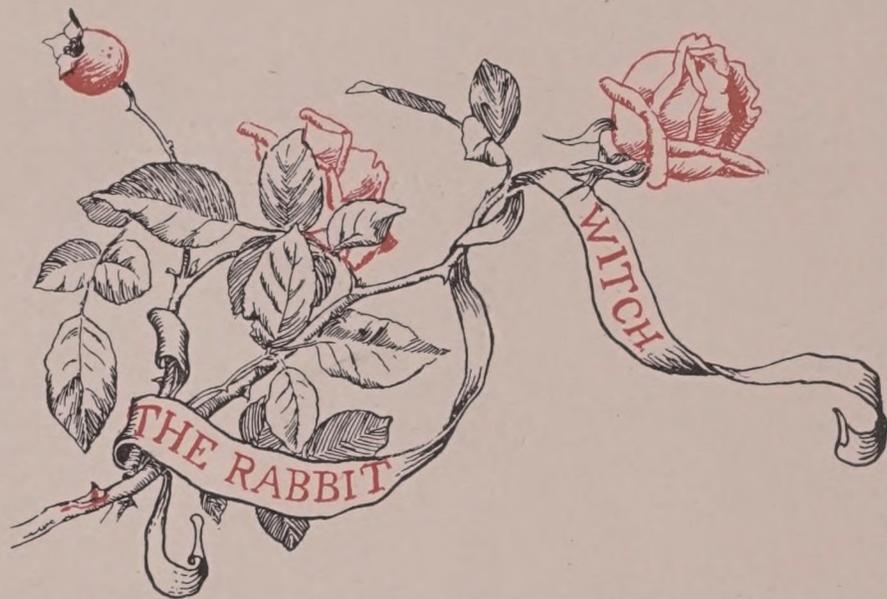


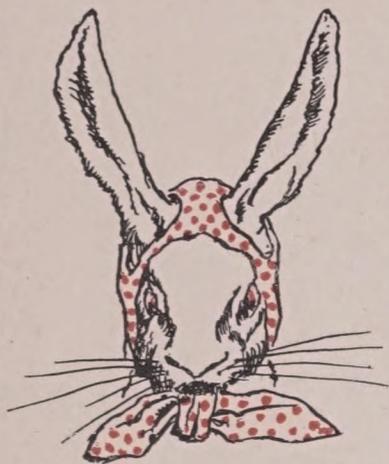
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**E**LIZA ANN was far from good;  
She did not act as children should,  
But fought and quarrelled so at play  
The boys and girls all ran away.



Her mother said, "Take care, my dear,  
The rabbit witch will come, I fear,  
And steal you one of these fine days,  
Unless you learn to mend your ways."



But yet Eliza did not heed;  
She was a naughty girl indeed.  
So now the rabbit witch has come,  
And carries her away from home.



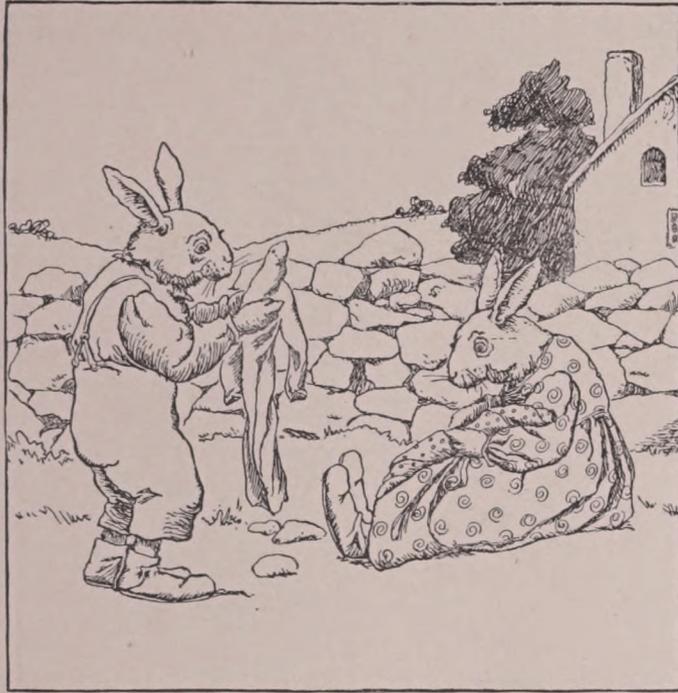
Down in the marshes far away  
The rabbit's children squeak and play;  
They tease Eliza till she cries,  
And with her apron hides her eyes.



When market day comes round again  
The witch locks up her house and then  
She says, "Be careful while you play;—  
Don't lose this child when I'm away."  
Now she has gone Eliza takes  
Her apron and a doll she makes.



"Just see this apron-girl," she cries;—  
"Look at it's nose and button eyes."  
And now her frock with belt and fold  
Into another doll is rolled;  
She gives it to the rabbit boy,  
Who squeaks and stamps his foot with joy.



“Now,” cry the rabbits, “we will play,  
For these girls cannot run away.”  
But while they rock their dolls and sing  
The witch brings home her marketing.  
“Where are you children dear,” she cries.  
The little rabbit boy replies;—



“Here with two girls we play, but one  
Far off, across the fields has run.”  
The rabbit witch went hurrying out  
To see what they could be about.  
There no Eliza could she find  
But only clothes she'd left behind.



Quick after her the old witch ran;—  
Haste, haste, make haste, Eliza Ann!  
Her own dear home was reached at last;  
The door was shut, the latch made fast.



But young Eliza had been taught  
A lesson as her mother thought:  
Henceforth she was so sweet and mild  
All loved to be with such a child.









**C**OME, come, get up," cried nurse to George;  
"The breakfast table's spread;  
The porridge will be getting cold,  
And you are still in bed."  
George only sighed and turned about,  
And went to sleep once more.  
Now did you ever know of such  
A lazy child before?

When little George at last arose  
The sun was overhead;  
He looked about, no clothes he saw;  
"Where can they be?" he said.  
"Nurse, nurse," he cried, "where are my clothes?  
I do not see them here."  
"Why, no," said nurse, "you will not find  
Your clothes to-day, I fear;



Some other child has now your suit,  
Because I thought, indeed,  
If you were going to lie in bed,  
Your clothes you would not need.  
But if you really wish to dress  
And go to school, see there,  
The little dress a year ago  
Your sister used to wear”



Now how ashamed is little George  
To have to dress like that;  
To have to wear his sister's frock,  
Her ribbons and her hat.  
Now in the street the children point  
And stare as he goes by;  
“Come look at Georgie-Lie-a-Bed,  
How he is dressed,” they cry.



Now little George is so ashamed  
To have them see him so,  
He turns about and home he runs  
As fast as he can go.  
“Oh, mother dear,” he cries, “if I  
May have my clothes once more,  
I’ll try to be a better boy  
Than I have been before.”



“Why,” says mamma, “since that’s the case,  
And you repent, my dear,  
Your little trousers, shirt, and coat—  
Just see—they all are here.”  
And since that day mamma and nurse  
Are proud and glad to see  
Their little George can such a prompt  
And early riser be.









**C**OME Jane," said grandmamma one day,  
"Tis time you learned to sew;  
At your age I could make a frock,  
And you should also know."

But Jane cared little for such things;  
She liked to make a noise;  
She used to run about all day,  
And shout, and play with boys.

So now she only tossed her head  
And ran with eager feet,  
And soon was racing up and down,  
And playing in the street.

Once Jane was to a party asked;  
Her friends would all be there;  
She wore her best sprigged muslin frock,  
And ribbons tied her hair.



When she was shown upstairs to lay  
Her hat upon the bed,  
She saw a little basket there,  
With needles, wax and thread.

“I wonder,” said untidy Jane,  
“If Mattie likes to sew;  
I’m glad that I have never learned;  
I should not care to know.”



With that she laughed and ran downstairs,  
But on the way—ah see!  
She’s caught her skirt upon a nail  
And torn it terribly.

If Jane had learned from grandmamma  
She might have mended it,  
But she had been a thoughtless child  
And could not sew a bit.



So with her frock all torn, into  
The room she had to go,  
And all the children wondering stared  
To see her looking so;

Then when Jane played it caught her feet  
And almost made her fall;  
That shamed her so she ran away  
And tried to hide from all.



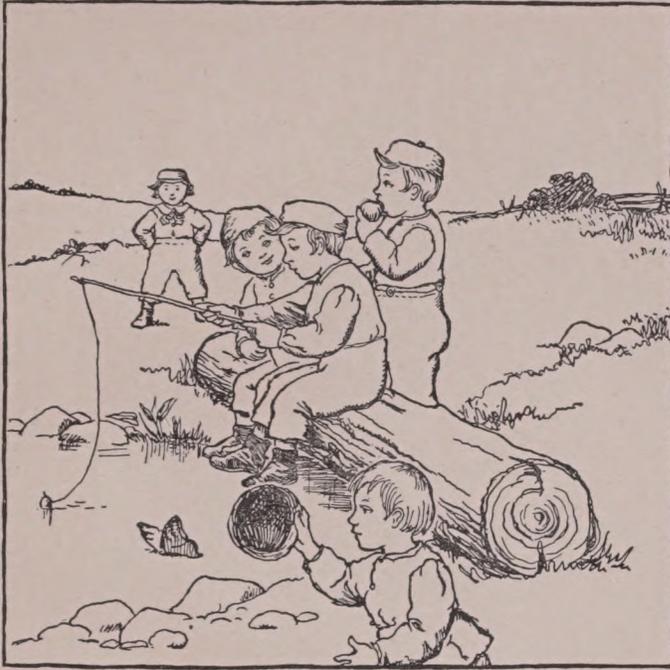
When nurse at last was sent for her,  
How glad was little Jane;  
She almost thought she never wished  
To romp or play again.

“Oh! grandmamma, dear grandmamma,  
Indeed, indeed,” said she,  
“If now you’ll teach me how to sew  
A thankful child I’ll be.”





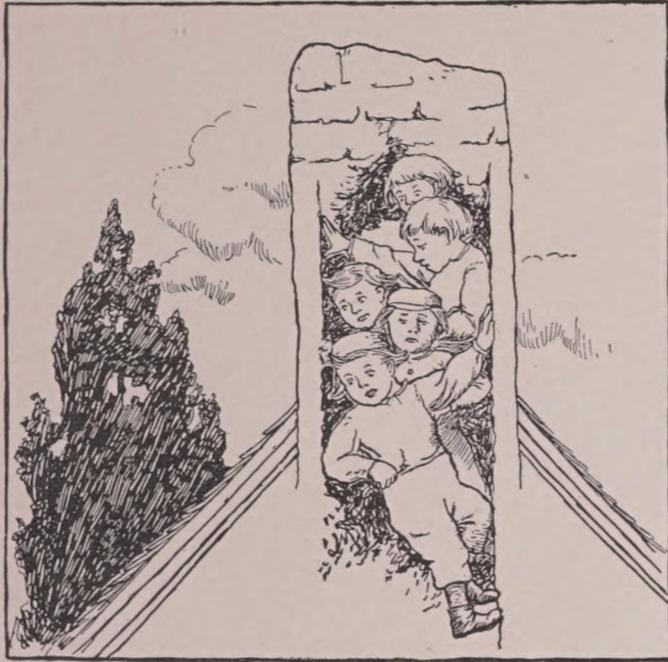




**T**HESE small boys started off for school  
But loitered by the way,  
Until at last 'twas quite too late  
To go to school that day.  
Ah naughty, naughty, truant boys!  
But listen what befell!  
Close by a wicked ogress lived,  
Down in a lonesome dell.



Now see her coming down the hill!  
Now see the children run!  
Her arms are long, her hands are strong,  
She catches every one.  
In vain the children kick and scream,  
The ogress takes them home  
And locks the door; then off she goes  
To bid the neighbors come.



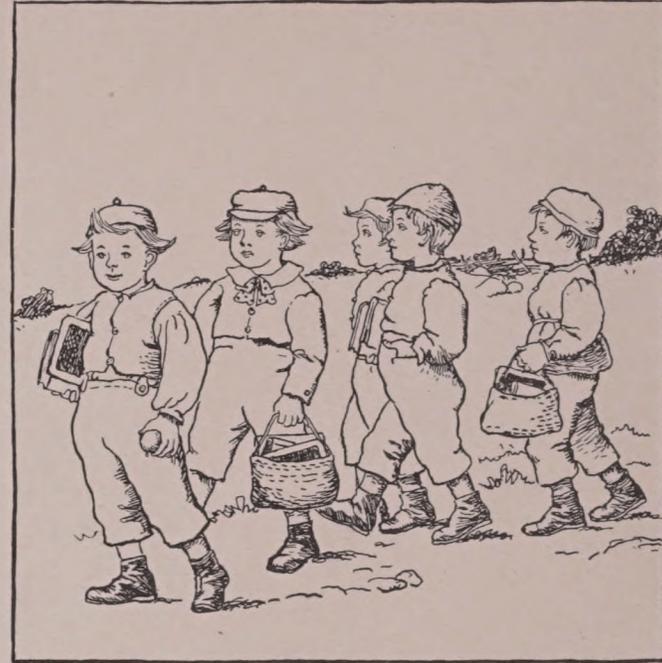
But clever Peter sees above  
The chimney, black and wide;  
“Quick, wipe your eyes and come,” he cries;  
“I’ve found a place to hide.”  
And none too soon, for scarce the last  
Is out of sight before  
They hear the wicked ogress  
Come stumping in the door.



Then from the chimney Peter bawls,  
“We’re hiding, stupid face!”  
“Oh, oh!” the ogress says, “I know;  
You’re up the chimney place.”  
So up the chimney now she looks;  
“I’ll fetch you out,” she cries;  
But puff! the clever Peter blows  
The soot down in her eyes.



All filled with black out through the door  
She hurries, howling still,  
Just when the other ogresses  
Are coming up the hill.  
They stop, they stare, they quake with fear,  
They stand appalled to see  
This dreadful, hopping, howling thing  
As black as black can be.



And now pell-mell away they run;  
But down the chimney place  
The boys climb ere the ogress  
Can clean her sooty face;  
And when they're safely home again  
They keep the master's rule,  
And never, never play again  
At truant from the school.









**A** NOISY boisterous child was Ann,  
And very far from good;  
She did not play the pleasant games  
That little children should;  
With ruffled hair and 'dresses torn  
She came home every day;  
In vain mamma said, "Ann, pray learn  
To be less rude at play."



Now little Ann came home one time  
In a most piteous plight,  
For she had fallen in the mud;  
Indeed she was a sight.  
The housemaid standing in the door  
Exclaimed, "What child is this?"  
"Why, Hannah, can't you see I'm Ann?"  
Cried out the little miss.



“Our little Ann in rags and dirt,  
Her hair all out of curl;  
No, no,” cried Hannah; “run away,  
You little beggar girl.  
If it is scraps of bread you want  
Go to the kitchen door;  
I can’t believe you’re any child  
I ever saw before.”



Now Ann has to the kitchen run  
With tears and streaming eyes;  
“Oh, dear cook, please to let me in;  
I’m little Ann,” she cries.  
“What little Ann?” the good cook says;  
“Indeed that cannot be.  
Our Ann would never wear such rags  
I’m very sure; not she!”



But as Ann, weeping, turned away,  
Her little dog ran out,  
And he began to lick her hands,  
And bark and jump about.  
“Why, why,” cried cook, “I never saw  
Dog Towzer act that way,  
Except when little Ann came home  
From school or after play.”



“And now I look again,” she said,  
“You are our little Ann.  
Come in and wash and mend your frock,  
As quickly as you can.”  
Now from that day the little miss  
Has played less boisterous plays,  
And been more tidy in her dress  
And quiet in her ways.









**T**HEIR mother bids them run and play,  
But not to wander far away.



“Quick,” Gretel cries, “let’s catch that hare  
Among the bushes over there.”



The hare now leads them in the chase  
Close by the witch's lurking-place.



"No use," she cries, "to kick and fight,  
For I will pick your bones to-night."



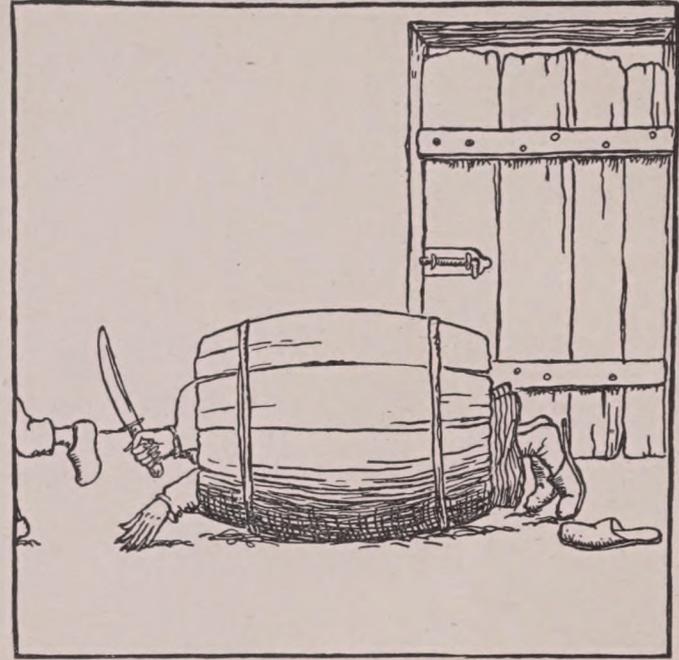
The old witch then puts on the pot,  
That she may boil Hans when it's hot.



But while she whets her knife outside  
Gretel opens the cage door wide.



The children see a barrel near;  
"Quick! into it! The witch is here!"



In after them the witch goes too,  
But she is stuck, and can't get through.



And now, ker-splash! down in the ditch  
They roll the barrel and the witch.



And see! her little girl and boy  
The mother welcomes home with joy.









**O**H please mamma," said little Jane,  
"May I go out to play?"  
"No, no," her mother answered her;  
"I fear 'twill rain to-day."



"With my umbrella green," said Jane,  
"I will not mind the wet."  
But still mamma replied, "No, no;  
A cold I fear you'd get."



But oh, Jane was a naughty girl!  
On her own way intent;  
Soon as mamma had turned away,  
Out in the street she went.  
The streets were wet and lonely;  
No children there at play;  
Only old Mother Webtoes  
The frog abroad that day.



Now little Jane she seizes,  
In spite of all her cries,  
And green umbrella, Jane and all,  
Away with her she flies.  
Far, far off in the river,  
Upon a moisty stone,  
Old Webtoes and her children  
Live in a hut alone;



And Jane's big green umbrella  
Old Webtoes hides away;  
She makes her sweep, she makes her scrub;  
Jane has no time to play.  
She spreads a bed of rushes,  
Where Jane may sleep at night,  
And wakes her in the morning  
As soon as it is light.



“Get up,” cries Mother Webtoes;  
“The breakfast you must get.”  
“Oh let me stay in bed,” says Jane;  
“The floor is cold and wet.”  
But Mother Webtoes stamps her foot,  
And makes the child arise;  
But as Jane sobs, behind the door,  
Ah, what is this she spies?

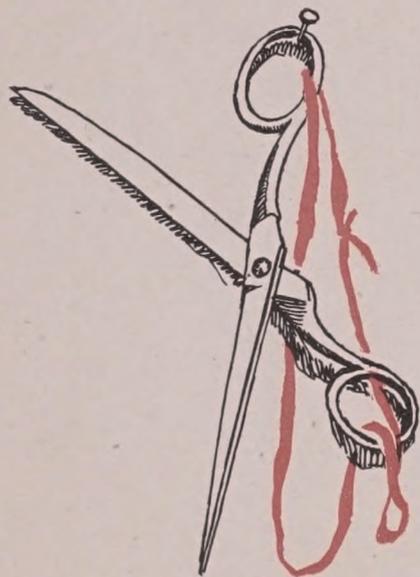


It is her green umbrella;  
She sets it now afloat,  
And down the river in it sails,  
As if it were a boat.  
“Oh Mother Webtoes, only look,”  
She hears the young frogs scream;  
“The little girl you brought to us  
Is sailing down the stream.”



But Jane is quite too far away  
For them to catch her then,  
And when at last she drifts ashore  
She sees her home again.  
She rushes to her mother's arms  
With sobs and streaming eyes—  
“Oh mother, mother dear, forgive  
Your naughty Jane,” she cries.







**A** NAUGHTY child Amanda was;—  
She would not comb her hair;  
Though it was rough and tangled, too,  
Amanda did not care;  
And when mamma the matted locks  
Would fain have brushed and tied,  
Amanda only pushed away  
Her hand and stamped and cried.



But listen now! It chanced one time  
Mamma had gone away.  
Amanda she had left at home  
All by herself that day.  
Then someone rattled at the latch;—  
Amanda heard him there;—  
She heard him shutting fast the door  
And creeping up the stair;—



Someone with scissors in his hand,  
And dreadful gleaming eyes;  
“Where is that child who will not comb  
The tangles out?” he cries.  
In vain Amanda shrieks and runs,  
He has her by the hair;  
Snip-snap! the shining scissors go  
And leave her head quite bare.



Now when mamma comes home again,  
Ah, what is her surprise  
To see Amanda's naked head  
And note her tearful eyes;  
And now lest she a cold should catch  
A nightcap she must wear,  
And when her locks have grown again  
I'm sure she'll comb her hair.







**I** DO not want to go to bed;  
I will not go!" cried naughty Fred.  
But it was growing very late;  
The clock had long ago struck eight,  
And so mamma, impatient grown,  
Went off and left him there alone.  
But hark! Creak, creak! upon the stair;  
It was the sand-man walking there.



In through the door he looked, and said,  
"What! Frederick will not go to bed?"  
In vain did Frederick kick and bawl,  
The sand-man would not heed at all;  
He tumbled Fred into his sack,  
And off he bore him on his back;  
Away he went out through the door,  
On, on for many a mile and more.



At last the sand-man, weary grown,  
Sat down to rest upon a stone.  
Then Frederick turned himself about,  
And quick he whipped his jack-knife out;  
Ke—scritchy—scritch! He cuts a slit  
And softly clambers out of it.  
And now he runs as quick as thought,  
And soon a heavy stone has brought;



He softly slips it in the sack  
That hangs upon the sand-man's back.  
Says clever Fred, "He will not see  
He has a stone instead of me."  
And now the sand-man grunts and sighs,  
And slowly he begins to rise.

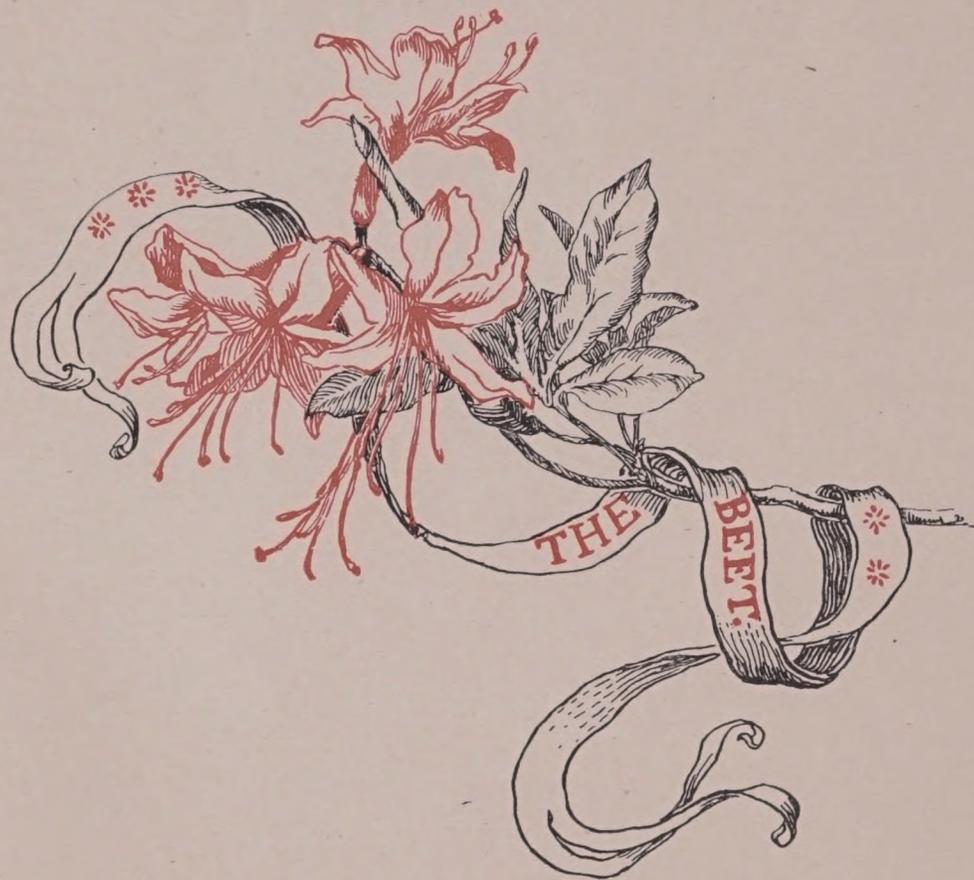


And Frederick hears him sigh, "Alack,  
How that boy thumps about my back!"  
The stupid sand-man never sees  
Where Frederick crouches on his knees,  
Behind the rock, till out of sight  
The old sand-man has vanished quite.



But Fred, a thankful boy is he,  
As home he hastens tearfully.  
And ah his mother! with what joy  
She welcomes home her little boy.  
"Ah always after this," cries Fred,  
"I will be good, and go to bed."









**I** WILL not wash my face I say;  
I will not wash," cried Jane, "to-day."  
In vain mamma said, "What disgrace!  
To go with dirty hands and face!"  
Jane only sulked and hung her head,  
And so she crept away to bed.



Now when the pleasant morning broke  
In bed the slovenly Jane awoke;  
She woke but could not turn in bed,  
Nor stretch herself, nor raise her head;  
She was a beet with nose and eyes,  
A beet of most enormous size.



And in the bed the beet leaves green  
Instead of arms and legs were seen;  
And then in came mamma and nurse;  
They did not know her, which was worse,  
But Jane could hear mamma; she said,  
“Why, why! how came this beet in bed?”



And now, by two stout boys, away  
They send the beet to town next day,  
That all the people there may see  
How large a beet can grow to be.  
They put her in a window there,  
Where every one can point and stare.



There the poor sloven sits and cries,  
Till beet juice oozes from her eyes;  
But ah! was such sight ever seen?  
The beet juice tears have washed her clean;  
And then, the strangest thing of all,  
As fast and faster still they fall,



The beet tears melt her back once more  
Into the child she was before.  
She does not stay to wipe her eyes,  
But home with eager feet she hies.  
“Oh mother, mother dear,” cries she,  
“Henceforth a cleaner child I’ll be.”





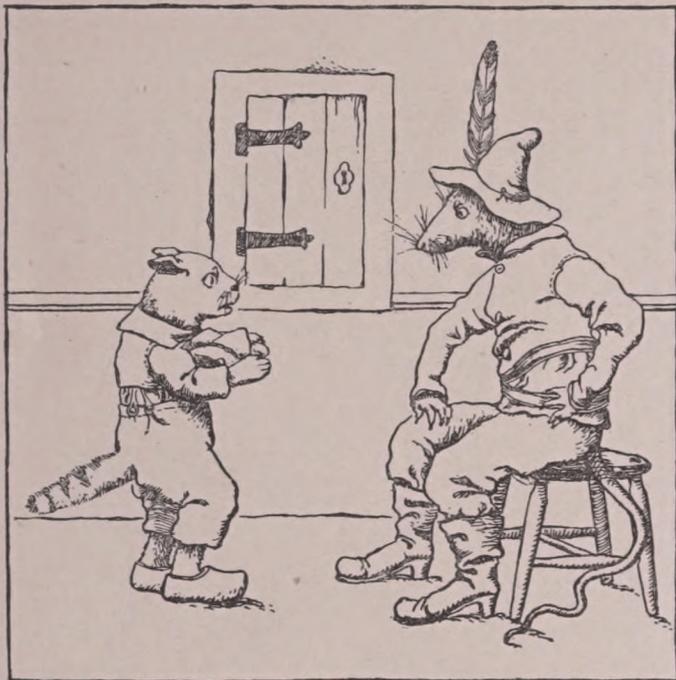




**A** KITTEN once lived all alone  
In a little yellow house;  
It lived on crusts of bread and cheese,  
And now and then a mouse.



A robber rat lived in a wood—  
A gloomy wood—close by;  
He had sharp teeth, and a pointed tail,  
And a wicked, restless eye.



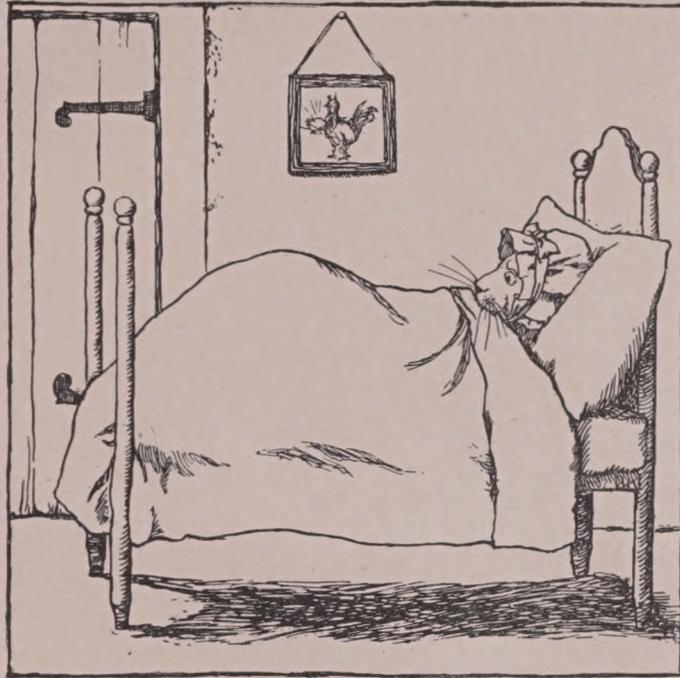
To the yellow house the rat would come,  
And strike the door—knock! knock!  
The kitten's tail would stand on end,  
It gave him such a shock.

Then in the rat would boldly march.  
“What have you here?” he'd say;  
And then he would steal the bread and cheese,  
And carry it all away.



At last the kitten went to ask  
Advice of some old cat  
Who lived close by, and told her all  
About the robber rat.

The wise old grey cat scratched her ear;  
“I'll fix this rat,” she said;  
So she pulled a night-cap over her ears  
And lay in the kitten's bed.



And now in marched the robber rat;  
“What!” cried he, “still in bed!  
Quick, fetch me out what cheese you have,  
And all your scraps of bread.”

“Spit-t-t!” with her claws and gleaming eyes  
The cat sprang out of bed.  
The robber gave one dreadful squeak  
And then away he fled.

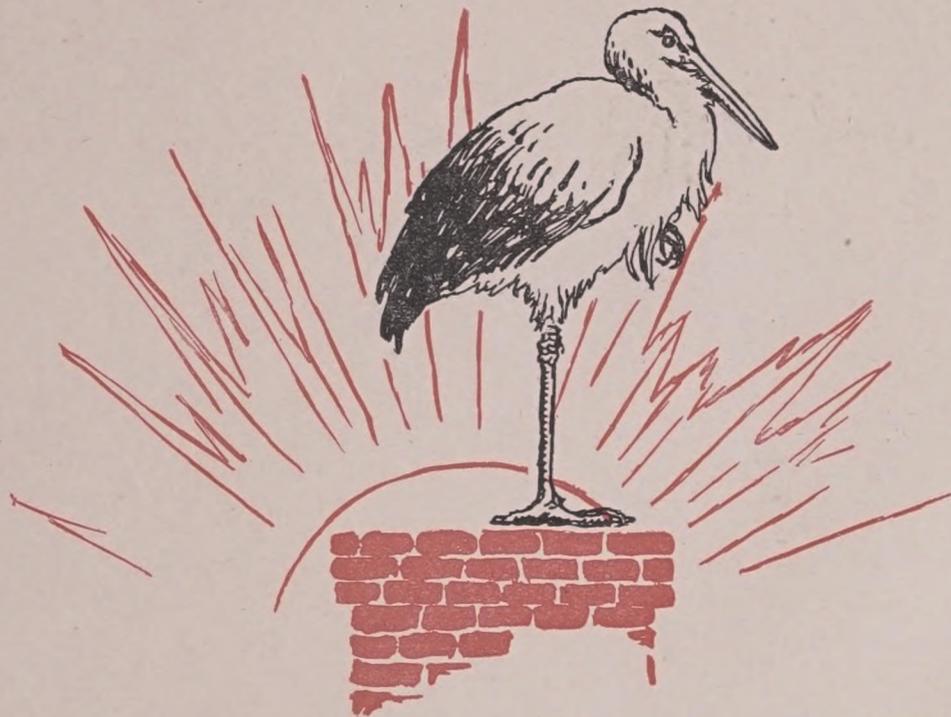


The old cat caught him by the tail  
Just as he reached the door,  
But snap! it broke, and out he ran,  
And ne'er was heard of more.

But for the little kitten,  
He danced about with glee;  
“The wicked rat has fled, has fled;  
Meow, meow!” sang he.









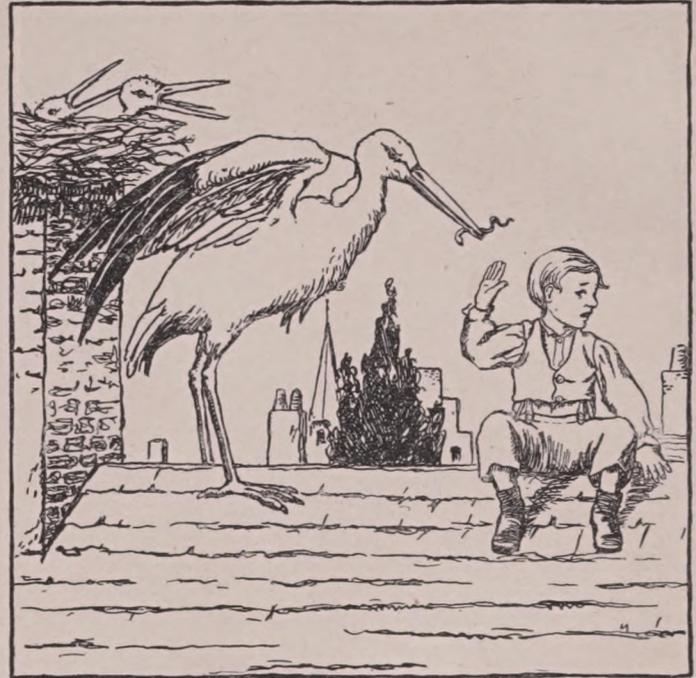
**A** VERY naughty boy was John;  
He quarrelled with his food,  
And would not eat his bread and milk,  
As all good children should.  
It grieved his kind mamma to see  
How thin and thinner grew  
Her little John, in spite of all  
That she could say or do.



Above the chimney Father Stork  
Heard all that Johnny said,  
And how each day he pushed away  
The bowl of milk and bread.  
And so it was, when kind mamma  
Had left the house one day,  
In through the kitchen door he came  
And carried John away.



Upon the roof the little storks  
Live high up in the sky,  
And far below them in the street  
They hear the folks go by.  
The old stork brings them, in his beak,  
The eels and frogs for food;  
But these he will not let them have  
Unless they're very good.



Such things poor Johnny could not eat;  
And as he sat and cried,  
He thought of all the bread and milk  
He used to push aside.  
"If I were only home again,  
I would be good," he said,  
"And never, never turn away  
From wholesome milk and bread."



If little John was thin before,  
Now thinner every day  
He grew, until you'd think the wind  
Would carry him away.  
So, when at last he was so lean  
His bones seemed poking through,  
There came a sudden gust of wind,  
And, puff! away he blew.



And when it blew him to the street,  
How fast he hurried home!  
And, oh, how glad his mother was  
To see her Johnny come!  
But gladder still she was to find  
That he had grown so good,  
And never now would turn away  
From wholesome simple food.













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